

“Preparing a Team of Leaders”

27TH GOVERNOR’S LUNCHEON FOR SCOUTING

Governor Eric J. Holcomb

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Remarks as prepared for delivery

Thank you, Rafael.

And thank you for your commitment to scouting in Indiana.

The Crossroads of America BSA Council that you chair, and Joe Wiltrout leads as president – well, it’s a real joy to see what’s being accomplished.

Scouts such as Amber Best are the evidence in front of our eyes for the C.A.C.’s impact.

Amber is exceptional, but she’s not alone in demonstrating how leadership and character can be encouraged at young ages.

That is scouting’s great contribution in Indiana, and the most enduring sort of contribution in any community.

This event fills me with tremendous pride each year.

It’s called the Governor’s Luncheon for Scouting, but the First Lady and I mainly get the fun parts.

We get to meet scouts and their families, reconnect with many of you, and then celebrate your success.

I also get to look around and just marvel.

Our state – and our own towns and neighborhoods – all face challenges, to be sure.

But as long as we can fill a big swath of a football field with people firmly committed to our youth – plus satellite sites in Richmond and Terre Haute – we’re going to be all right.

Because the virtuous cycle of a new generation arriving with fresh energy, ideas, and commitment, to build on what’s already strong and make it even stronger: that continuing cycle ensures we’re going to be all right.

So, where does my confidence come from?

And how does that cycle of renewal really work?

Here, I mean, in Indiana.

Because it’s not working quite as well in other places.

Some BSA councils, and other volunteer-driven organizations, they’re struggling.

Football fields across America are not being filled with people ready to devote their personal time, their talents, and their resources to helping youngsters who in most cases they don’t even know.

This year I decided to spend some time reflecting on that question – the question of why things work a bit differently here in Indiana.

The organizers of this luncheon gave me the spark.

The spark is right there in this year’s Luncheon for Scouting theme: “Preparing a Team of Leaders.”

Let me state the obvious: that’s a really unusual theme.

In fact, when I googled “preparing a team of leaders,” I got zero results.

Zero!

Just for comparison, I googled “preparing a bowl of cereal,” and I got pages of results!

That mystery – about how to pour stuff into a bowl and add milk – apparently is keeping people awake at night.

But when it comes to “preparing a team of leaders” – zip.

I think that’s because, to a lot of folks, “team of leaders” is basically an oxymoron – a phrase that contradicts itself.

In this view, you have leaders, and you have teams – two separate sets of people.

Leaders are in charge, and teams follow that charge, basically doing what they’re told.

If you buy into that view of things – as I think many people do – then something called a “team of leaders” cannot even exist.

In Indiana, we’re open to an alternative view, and it looks something like this:

Sure, top leaders are essential in many cases: as the final decision-makers.

But those individuals need more leaders around them, ready to fill knowledge gaps, skills gaps, and sometimes even character gaps;

People who can teach, people who can inspire, people with the courage to raise tough questions, people capable of leading their own teams, and people ready to step up to final decision making when their time comes, as it usually does come.

Amber Best gave us an example in her speech a few moments ago.

For her Eagle Project at Alverna Creek, it was Amber’s time to make the final decisions.

But she didn’t work alone.

She told us that she needed a team, and that she invested in building that team.

And as a result, they were ready for anything – even a “zombie apocalypse.”

Which reminds me, I need to form a state-level anti-zombie task force – long overdue!

So, let me sum this up: To respond to challenges and achieve goals at the highest level, a strong community such as Indiana doesn't need just a handful of leaders.

It needs a very large number of leaders.

You might even say: A strong community needs *teams of leaders*, with plenty of new ones always on deck.

Part of my job as governor, as I understand it, is to make the rest of the world aware of what makes the state of Indiana stand out.

And there's a lot of good to talk about.

Our capital city is the amateur sports capital of the country – if not the world – and it's one of the most livable cities in the U.S. by almost any measure, graced by incredible cultural institutions, trails, and parks.

A growing chunk of central Indiana has taken its place among the most important life-science hubs in the U.S.

And the state as a whole is now in the very top tier of the emerging alternative-energy industry of the twenty-first century, ranking no less than fourth in clean energy under development among all 50 states.

Let that sink in!

And on the ideas front, we're known in Indiana as pioneers of school reform, workforce development, and the art and science of philanthropy.

And I could go on and on – believe me I could!

But as I thought about our strengths ahead of this luncheon, it struck me that there's one Indiana distinction that I've neglected to talk much about, a distinction that actually may be the root cause of all the other distinctions.

Indiana produces leaders, in large numbers, completely out of proportion to our relatively small population.

All the examples of Indiana's accomplishments that I just mentioned (and did I mention that I could've named many more?) those things did not happen because a handful of power brokers called the shots.

They happened because many different teams of leaders, diverse in every sense, swung into action over the course of years and in some cases generations.

And it's no accident that we have those teams of leaders.

Just think about the number of institutions in Indiana that are devoted to leadership development as their reason for being:

Nearly six thousand people are products of the legendary Stanley K. Lacy Executive Leadership Series alone.

And instead of saying, "well that's enough," Hoosiers created the Orr Fellowship, the Mitch Daniels Leadership Foundation, and the Indiana Leadership Forum to inspire even more folks to realize their potential as leaders.

Where young people are concerned, we have (among others) Indy's Center for Leadership Development, a 4-H effort in all 92 counties powered by Purdue Extension – and of course, the finest BSA council in the country: the Crossroads of America Council that we're celebrating here today!

Scouting is strong in Indiana.

You are the evidence of that.

There are several reasons for scouting's great strength in Indiana.

Those reasons include its own high-quality leadership, the engagement of families and communities, and of course the hard work of individual scouts such as the ones here today.

But all of that is enhanced by the fact that scouting in Indiana is part of what we have every right to call the larger ecosystem of leadership development in this state: the interlocking teams of leaders, and everything we do to build them.

Indiana leads in leadership, and the Crossroads of America Council of BSA is one of the big reasons why.

Take that message with you.

Remind yourselves of it, and remind others.

Our ability to prepare teams of leaders is making Indiana more and more attractive to new residents and new investments alike.

Keep doing what you're doing, and we can be confident in scouting's future – and therefore, in Indiana's future!

Thank you!

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And now, it's my pleasure to remind everyone about one of the coolest things that will happen in Indiana next year.

The U.S. Navy's Blue Angels flying team will be here in late October for the Crossroads Air Show benefiting this Crossroads of America council and other important organizations.

As a Navy man, I will be there, feeling really proud.

I had to share these photos you're seeing on the screen.

The Blue Angels are amazingly talented pilots.

And they're also extraordinary human beings, a true *team of leaders*, of the kind we've been talking about.

Just a few days ago, two of them were in town for some advance work on the air show, and the First Lady and I – and my own team – got to meet them when they dropped in on a gathering of my cabinet at the official Governor's residence.

They stole the show. Actually, I was happy to hand them the show!

With those sweeteners added, here comes a video that I'm certain will build even more excitement for the Crossroads Air Show.

Enjoy it!

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